

# REVIEW OF PARTICIPANT TRAINING EVALUATION STUDIES

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by

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development.

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FOREWORD

The concept and overall design for this study were developed by the Participant Training Working Group, a joint venture of the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination/Center for Development Information and Evaluation (PPC/CDIE) and the Bureau for Science and Technology/Office of International Training (S&T/IT). This informal group was established to develop and mount a long-term impact evaluation program for participant training with approaches, objectives, and results that would have wide acceptance within AID specifically and, perhaps, within the economic development community more generally.

To provide a sound base for such an effort, a thorough literature review of evaluative reports done by or for AID during the past 30 years or so was required. One of the primary aims of the review was to determine and present in logical and analysis-facilitating form the recommendations for improvements presented in past evaluations. The second aim was to ascertain the positions or actions taken by AID in response to these recommendations. The group believed an analysis of these two kinds of data -- what AID had been advised to do and what, in fact, AID did in response to that advice (and, possibly, why) -- would provide policy and operational guidance regarding the need for and nature of future evaluation efforts.

This report meets well the group's perceived information needs regarding past evaluations by identifying available studies and by describing their nature, coverage (or focus), and recommendations. The report, particularly its recording and classifying of some 1,400 recommendations (and the annotated bibliography of the documents used for this review) comprises an important, reliable, and historically based addition to AID's pool of information resources for participant training.

The report is, we believe, unavoidably less authoritative in its other major aim, for to determine retrospectively and conclusively past Agency positions and actions taken in response to advice offered to it would be not only extremely difficult but very time consuming and expensive. Clearly, such an undertaking was beyond the resources available for this study.

Despite its relative shortcomings in determining AID responses, we believe the report is useful in helping to define the nature and essential parameters of future participant training evaluation objectives and activities. Its documentation of the extreme paucity of past efforts to assess the impact (results) of participant training and the consequent lack of organized, credible data (as opposed to impressionistic, anecdotal data) represents an important contribution to the Agency's understanding of where we stand and what we should now do in this area. Similarly, the report presents detailed documentation on the substantial level of past efforts and the voluminous body of data and views generated over the years on AID's participant training processes and procedures.

Largely on the basis of the report's findings (and the independent views of a number of current and former field-experienced AID staff), PPC/CDIE and S&T/IT, in cooperation with the regional bureaus, are carrying out the following:

1. Encouraging field action to ensure that expansion of individual country participant training programs is accompanied (and, as necessary, preceded) by careful USAID and host country attention to the processes and operational matters involved in participant training activities. These matters, (e.g., participant selection, predeparture orientation, placement, and English language training) have repeatedly been the subject of

recommendations in past evaluation reports; they warrant continuing attention and action in the planning for and conduct of our participant training programs, whether maintained at current levels or enhanced.

2. Deferring further centralized efforts to "evaluate" on a worldwide basis the participant training program's processes and procedures (with the possible exception of cost and personnel matters). Process and procedures "evaluation" has been done often in the past; the cumulative effect of this steady, frequent effort on the Agency's participant training program operations is unclear and is likely to remain so until we get a better grasp of the program's impact.
3. Proceeding with plans designed to help AID serve a greater coordinating and leadership role in the entire area of foreign training (i.e., training of foreign nationals in the United States or a third country) by (a) reviewing and reporting on evaluation work in this area currently underway by other aid donors and interested organizations, (b) and reviewing and reporting on both the "state-of-the-art" of foreign training and its evaluation.
4. Proceeding with efforts to develop and mount a diverse, long-term participant training impact evaluation program. This program will include early efforts to define and gain broad Agency acceptance of impact indicators and means of measuring them, and to develop a flexible model for country participant training impact evaluations. These country evaluations, as adapted from the model, will be planned and implemented jointly by AID and the concerned host country (private and governmental institutions). These evaluations will employ comparative and longitudinal analysis when feasible (comparing AID and non-AID supported trainees, for example) and will use existing data on former participants and country economic statistical series.

The Participant Training Working Group would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to Laurel Elmer and Thomas Moser for their sustained and dedicated effort and for the informative and useful report that resulted from it. Members of the group included Raymond Cohen, Chairman, Marion K. Warren, Matt Seymour, Ardeth Betts, Ronald Rogers, and Anita Stephens.

Noted: A more detailed Working Paper "Review of Participant Training Evaluation Studies," including appendixes summarizing reports and recommendations by year and funding category, is also available from CDIE.

Participant Training Working Group  
PPC/CDIE  
S&T/IT  
Agency for International Development  
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## PREFACE

The authors of this report were commissioned by the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination's Center for Development Information and Evaluation to identify and review the various evaluative surveys, reports, and studies of AID's participant training program produced since its inception some 30 years ago. Specific project evaluations were generally applicable to the participant training process. The literature search included all relevant evaluative reports concerned with participant training and sponsored by AID. In addition, several studies not sponsored by AID have been included because they proved to be so germane to our objectives.

The purposes of this research activity were fourfold:

1. To review what has been evaluated in the participant training program since its inception and to analyze the major findings and recommendations over time and by region
2. To compile the most relevant documents in an abstracted bibliographic form
3. To determine in broad terms what AID's response has been to past evaluations (i.e., have recommended remedial actions been taken, rejected, or ignored?)
4. Based on the results of the preceding three steps, to recommend what measures AID might take to improve the participant training program

## SUMMARY

U.S. Government-sponsored academic and technical training in the United States or a third country for citizens of developing countries, also known as participant training, has been a major and integral part of U.S. foreign assistance since the inauguration of the Marshall Plan in 1949. Since then, more than 240,000 foreign nationals have been sponsored for training, with an average of 8,000 participants annually in recent years. Many former participants have achieved positions of leadership in their home countries, and the record abounds with testimonials from participants concerning the value and importance of their training experience. Despite this generally favorable view of the participant training program, there has been little in the way of a systematic and objective understanding of just how effective the program has been and what impact it has had on participants' job performance or host country development. The need for such insight is particularly compelling at present in view of AID's intention to increase the number of participants by at least 50 percent over the next several years.

The Center for Development Information and Evaluation in AID's Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination recently undertook to develop an impact evaluation program for participant training. This report represents the first step of this effort, which involved an examination of past AID evaluations of the participant training program for the purpose of identifying the nature and frequency of recommendations for improvements in the program and AID's response to them.

**Literature Review.** A total of 206 relevant evaluation studies and related reports were reviewed and analyzed. The reports cover a 30-year time span as well as all geographic regions in which AID has operated. Types of reports include general studies, regional and country-specific studies, evaluations of particular aspects of the training program (e.g., orientation, selection and placement, English language training, third-country training), and sector-related training evaluations. An annotated bibliography of these documents was developed and has been published as a separate report.

An analysis of the frequency of the studies reveals relatively limited activity during the 1970s. This drop-off can be attributed, in part, to AID's preoccupation with Vietnam then as well as to the congressional mandate in the mid-1970s to reach the "poorest of the poor" in the developing world. The fact that Africa and the Near East lead in the number of studies undertaken in recent years reflects a substantial increase in participant training in these regions compared with Asia and Latin America.

With some notable exceptions, the literature review revealed that evaluation of participant training has been limited to operational issues rather than to the effectiveness of long-term impact of training. The few attempts to analyze impact included a comprehensive, worldwide evaluation survey of participant training in 23 countries during the early 1960s; a major exit interview program involving nearly 10,000 participants undertaken by the Development Education and Training Research Institute at American University during the late 1960s and early 1970s; and an attempt in 1974 to develop and test criteria and methodologies for measuring the impact of the participant training experience on job performance. Apparently, none of the various attempts to assess impact generated much interest in replication or further research and development.

**Analysis of Recommendations.** Of the 206 reports reviewed, 141 contain specific recommendations on different phases of the training program. These recommendations were tabulated and classified into 12 categories representing the major features or elements of the participant training program. Similar recommendations were clustered into 123 different recommendations within these major categories for analysis over time and by region. The 12 categories are as follows, in order of the most frequently mentioned, with the major current (since 1975) issues noted:

1. Orientation. More and better orientation stands out as

the most frequent and enduring recommendation made through the years, with the predeparture phase receiving the most attention. The need for written orientation materials and for tapping in-country resources (e.g., returned participants, U.S. technicians, Peace Corps Volunteers) for predeparture orientation were two more recent concerns.

2. **AID Management.** Better communication and coordination among participating agencies and offices (i.e., Missions, AID/Washington, training institutions, and contractors); better record keeping in general; strengthening of staff involved in participant training; and standardizing policies in Handbook 10 for all AID-sponsored participants were recommended.
3. **Training Design.** Reports stressed the need for more specialized, practical, and relevant training, and for more information on training institutions and program offerings for program planners.
4. **Reentry and Followup.** Reports called for more contact with returned participants; better accountability of returnees; and more support for the professional development of returnees in using and sharing their newly acquired skills and ideas, as well as in updating their training through continuing education.
5. **Training Strategy.** Greater awareness of host government absorptive capacity when planning training design and more donor coordination in planning and sharing resources are needed.
6. **Support Services at Training Site.** Reports called for more personal (cross-cultural) and academic counseling services, more administrative support, and more frequent participant progress reports.
7. **Training Location.** There should be more use of third and in-country training and a strengthening of field staff therefor; regional training resources should be inventoried and evaluated.
8. **Participant Selection.** Recommendations were to improve selection criteria and procedures and to encourage more women and private sector participants.
9. **English Language Training.** AID's language testing program needs to be reviewed (concentrating on type of test, scoring, and standards), and more English language training is required at regional centers or in-country.
10. **Complementary Programs.** Supplementary, specialized programs (e.g., management, administration) should be built into training programs; more reentry workshops are needed; and complementary programs should be evaluated.

11. Participant Placement. Placement documentation (Project Implementation Orders for Participants -- PIO/P) needs to be more flexible, yet detailed enough to ensure proper placement; criteria for selecting training institutions should be reviewed; and the process for evaluating credentials needs improvement.
12. Research and Evaluation. More research is needed on evaluating the impact of training, including definitions, methodology, and criteria for measurement; problems of equivalency should be investigated.

The 17 recommendation clusters cited most frequently since 1975 without regard to category, are as follows, in descending frequency:

1. Participants should be given thorough predeparture technical and cross-cultural orientation, using such resources as written orientation materials and returned participants.
2. Missions should follow up on returned participants by instituting procedures for accounting for returnees, maintaining contact with them, and supporting their continued professional development.
3. Short-term complementary programs should be built into training programs to provide participants with skills for adjusting to their home environment and job responsibilities, for example, management/communications and reentry workshops.
4. Record keeping in general needs to be improved.
5. AID's English language testing program needs review.
6. More research is needed on different approaches to orientation, including review of different aspects of the Washington International Center program.
7. AID should strengthen staff involved in participant training.
8. Programs should include more practical training opportunities.
9. Participants should be provided with personal and academic counseling at the training site.
10. Regional and national training resources should be inventoried.
11. Per diem and allowance rates need to be reviewed.
12. Planners need more information on training institutions and their programs.



13. AID should improve mechanisms for managing third-country training.
14. More research on evaluating training impact is needed.
15. Better communication and coordination is needed among participating agencies (e.g., AID/Washington, Missions, training institutions, and contractors).
16. More English language training should be conducted in-country.
17. All AID-sponsored participants should be subject to the policy guidelines in Handbook 10.

AID Response to Evaluations and Recommendations. The Agency's response to the major recommendations made over the years was assessed through interviews with selected AID officers and a limited review of relevant policy and strategy papers. A 1-day workshop was also held with 12 current and former AID officers having substantial experience with the participant training program. The workshop discussion and a review of current trends and activities underway in AID bureau-sponsored participant training programs supported the impression that AID's past evaluation efforts have been of some use in guiding the planning and conduct of participant training. Yet, the frequency with which many recommendations have been made through the years and the fact that some recommendations made in the 1960s are among those most frequently cited over the past 10 years raise questions concerning the utility of evaluation activity in general and AID response in particular.

Among the explanations given for this seemingly limited followup to a number of recurring recommendations include the uncertainty of AID's constituency, leading to shifts in policies and strategies; frequent personnel turnover in Washington and the field; lack of personnel and funds to follow through with recommended improvements; lack of leadership support and the lower priority given to participant training in general; and circumstantial considerations making some recommendations inappropriate or unrealistic in certain situations. Many interviewees agreed that improvements in the program are needed, especially given the current, substantial expansion of the program.

Recommended Actions. Given the repetitiveness of certain recommendations over the years and the inconclusive evidence concerning why recommended improvements were or were not made, the following issues are presented as areas needing further study or attention before the program is expanded substantially:

1. Training Impact Assessment. A set of measures for assessing the impact of training on participant job performance and home country development should be developed and adopted. This impact assessment research should consider the work done by the American Institutes for

Research in the mid-1970s.

2. Orientation. More and better orientation should be provided to participants, especially in the predeparture phase, by providing written materials and the resources of former participants and U.S. technical personnel.
3. Followup. AID should maintain contact with former participants. More support should be provided for the professional development of returned participants in using, sharing, and updating their knowledge and skills.
4. Complementary Programs. Short-term management and communications training should be made an integral part of a participant's program where appropriate.
5. English Language Training. AID should reexamine policies and provisions for English language training, especially for testing, standards, and location.
6. Third-Country Training. More practical and operational information is needed on regional training resources and mechanisms for managing third-country training.
7. U.S. Training Officer Staffing. AID should either provide more U.S. staff overseas in its Missions or Regional Economic Development and Support Offices (REDSOs), or upgrade the capabilities of Foreign Service National training staff overseas and Bureau for Science and Technology/International Training Office staff to meet the challenge of the expanding program.

In addition to investigating or undertaking improvements in these areas, it is recommended that a more comprehensive determination be made of both AID response to evaluation efforts and critical issues from the USAID Mission perspective. Because major responsibility for participant training rests in the field, which is also where improvements in country training operations will have the most impact, the views of overseas Missions personnel should be solicited. This effort might include a survey using mailed questionnaire and several field visits to obtain firsthand field perceptions of the critical issues and how they should be addressed.

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFGRAD - African Graduate Fellowship Program

AID - Agency for International Development

ALIGU - American Language Institute, Georgetown University

CDIE - Center for Development Information and Evaluation, AID

DETRI - Development Education and Training Research Institute,  
American University

DIS - Development Information System data base (AID)

ELT - English language training

FSN - Foreign Service National

ICA - International Cooperation Agency

IT - Office of International Training, Bureau for Science and  
Technology, AID

LAC - Latin America and the Caribbean

NAFSA - National Association of Foreign Student Affairs

NE - Near East

PIO/P - Project Implementation Order/Participant(s)

PPC - Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, AID

REDSO - Regional Economic Development and Support Office

S&T - Bureau for Science and Technology, AID

TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language

USOM - U.S. Overseas Mission

WIC - Washington International Center

## 1. BACKGROUND

Participant training, which is the formal provision of academic or technical training to host country citizens in the United States or a third country, has been a major and integral part of U.S. foreign assistance since the inauguration of the Marshall Plan in 1949. Although the nature and emphasis of foreign aid have shifted through the years, the need to strengthen human resources in developing countries has remained constant. A training element is present in nearly all Agency for International Development (AID) activities, whether it be informal, on-the-job training of a U.S. technician's host country counterpart, a 1-week training course in animal husbandry for farmers, or a formal Ph.D. program at a U.S. university. Although no attempt has been made to calculate the total number of host country personnel involved in the various forms of AID-related training, the more formally defined participant training program has sponsored more than 240,000 foreign nationals since the Marshall Plan era and has averaged 8,000 participants annually in recent years.

Table 1 presents an overview of the magnitude of the program and its regional trends since 1958, based on a recent analysis by the Bureau for Science and Technology/International Training Office (S&T/IT). The most noticeable trend in the last 10 years is the major increase of participants in Africa and more recently in the Near East, with a substantial decrease in Asia and the Latin American region.

Countless success stories have been recorded in the participant training program. Many former participants have achieved leadership positions in their home countries, and the record abounds with testimonials from participants on the value of their training experience in shaping their professional and personal lives. Despite this generally positive regard for the participant training program, there has been little systematic and objective understanding of just how effective the program has been. The need for such insight is particularly compelling given AID's reported current interest in increasing the number of participants by at least 50 percent over the next several years. Because of AID's goal, the Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination, Center for Development Information and Evaluation (PPC/CDIE) decided to examine through a literature review past AID experience in evaluating the participant training program. The remainder of this report addresses the results of this examination.

Table 1. Total AID Training Program Participants by Year and Region available on Microfiche

Note: LAC is Latin America and the Caribbean; NE is the Near East.

- a) Regional breakdowns are not available.
- b) Does not include participants who started training in fiscal year 1984.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Methodology

The documents located in the search include AID/Washington and Mission staff reports, AID-sponsored studies by individuals and organizations, and several other reports not sponsored by AID but pertaining to the AID training experience. The search was comprehensive in that it identified all relevant reports found through the following sources:

- AID's Development Information System (DIS) data base
- AID library
- External data bases (Social Science, Dissertation, and ERIC)

- Consultation with regional bureau evaluation officers, Auditor General's Office, and S&T/IT
- Consultation with relevant agencies outside of AID: U.S. Department of Agriculture, the General Accounting Office's Office of Foreign Visitors, Bureau of the Census, Management Communications Seminars, Inc., Partners for International Education and Training, Washington International Center, and National Association for Foreign Student Affairs

## 2.2 The Search

The search produced 206 relevant documents, most of which were financed or sponsored by AID. The reports cover a 30-year period and all regions of the world in which AID has operated. The type of document varies from highly quantified, computerized correlation analyses, in which attempts are made to measure the impact of training against a host of variables, to a hand-written descriptive narrative of returnees in a particular country.

For bibliographic purposes, the 206 evaluation studies or reports have been classified into five sections as follows:

- General studies
- Country-specific studies
- Regional studies
- Evaluations of particular elements of the participant training process (e.g., orientation, selection and placement, English language training, complementary programs, and third-country training)
- Evaluations of particular sectors (e.g., agriculture, health, management)

The majority of documents can be found in AID's DIS data base (noted by a "PN" or "PD" number in the annotated bibliography) or in the AID library (noted by a "DIC" number).

Although the number of reports may seem large, it is in fact modest considering the magnitude and costs of the participant training program and the numerous actors involved in managing the program since 1948 (e.g., over 60 Missions, hundreds of contractors, and various offices within AID/Washington).

The only significant trend in the frequency of the studies is Table 2, only 61 studies were undertaken then, compared with 82 in the 1960s and 49 in just the first 4 years of the current decade. The dropoff in the 1970s can be partly attributed to AID's preoccupation with Vietnam and the congressional mandate in the

mid-1970s to reach the "poorest of the poor" in the developing world. Also, training costs almost doubled during the 1970s, limiting the number of new participants. From a regional viewpoint, it is somewhat surprising that fewer evaluation studies have been performed for the Latin American region than for the other regions, given that this region has had more participants than other regions, as reflected in Table 1. Accordingly, only 22 Latin American region reports were included in our review, compared with an average of 31 for the other three regions. Also, this region has produced only 3 reports in the past 10 years, compared with 5 for Asia, 14 for the Near East, and 18 for Africa. That Africa and the Near East lead in studies undertaken in recent years reflects the substantial increase in participant training in these regions as compared with the other two regions.

Table 2. Distribution of Total Reports by Year and Region

Note: LAC is Latin America and the Caribbean; NE is the Near East.

## 2.3 Findings

With some notable exceptions, evaluation of training has been limited to operational issues rather than the effectiveness or long-term impact of training. In fact, AID has undertaken only one systematic, worldwide evaluation study of participant training, and that was in the late 1950s and early 1960s. That major comprehensive effort, which was initiated by a policy directive from the Agency's Administrator, was managed by AID's (then the International Cooperation Agency) Office of International Training under contract with a Washington-based social science research organization, the Bureau for Social Science Research. The major objective was to develop standardized instruments and methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of the Agency's participant training program and the degree to which participants were utilizing their training back home. Accordingly, categories were developed for classifying returned participants as high or low utilizes of training, and variables were identified for an analysis of factors that appeared to influence the degree of utilization. This methodology was to be applied at the Mission level in as many countries as feasible. Twenty-three separate country surveys were conducted and analyzed under this program, contributing to separate regional and global analyses.

The data gathered through this worldwide survey present detailed information on the training program in the selection and predeparture phases, the training sojourn abroad, and the post-training period in the home country. Based on there findings, the primary recommendations for improving the program included the following, in order of importance as factors most likely to influence the degree of utilization: (1) followup activities with returned participants should be increased, especially their

contacts with USAID; (2) participants should be more involved in the predeparture planning of the program; (3) long-term training would ensure better utilization than short-term training; (4) supervisors should be involved in selecting participants and planning the program; (5) plans for using the training after returning should be formulated during the planning stage; and (6) participants should be better informed about the satisfaction with their training programs before departure.

These recommendations were addressed to the Mission level as the locus of greatest influence in improving the effectiveness of participant training. As will be shown in the analysis of recommendations (see Section 2.4.12), these 6 issues were among the 11 most frequently cited recommendations from our review of evaluation reports spanning almost 30 years. The prevalence of these recommendations raises questions concerning AID's record in responding to its evaluation efforts in participant training.

The only other broad-gauged evaluation activity AID has sponsored over the past 30 years was during 1967-1972, when systematic exit-interviewing was conducted under contract by the Development Education and Training Research Institute (DETRI) of American University of nearly all participants who passed through Washington, D.C. prior to returning to their home countries. The purpose of this activity was to learn how participants viewed their U.S. experience, both technically and nontechnically, and to provide pertinent information to AID and other participating institutions for improving program operations. Over 10,000 participants were interviewed during this 6-year period. The principal findings from these interviews were analyzed and presented to AID/Washington, the Missions, participating agencies, and training institutions in a unique set of reports addressing selected issues to the respective audiences.

As originally conceived, the DETRI project was to have been carried out in three phases: exit-interviews, in-country predeparture interviews before training, and in-country post-training followup. It was envisioned that the information from these three stages would facilitate a longitudinal analysis of the effectiveness or impact of the training program. The latter two phases, however, were not implemented. The exit-interview process produced very useful and timely information; however, without the followup phase, the extent to which participants eventually utilized their training could not be evaluated.

Assessing a participant's eventual utilization of training is one of the most critical elements in evaluating the impact of training. Criteria developed in the worldwide survey and in several other evaluation studies for measuring utilization or impact of training have included such factors as the returnee's job level after training compared with pretraining; specific on-the-job accomplishments related to new ideas and techniques acquired during training; non-job or civic accomplishments, such as influence in an organization or community; and returnee's training of others, indicating a multiplier effect. These attempts, however, to attribute variables to different aspects of the training experience

have proved inconclusive.

In recognition of this problem, AID undertook a major effort in 1974 to develop and test criteria and methodologies for measuring the impact of a participant's training experience on his or her post-training job performance. The contractor, the American Institutes for Research, developed a training impact assessment approach that it concluded, after field testing in several countries, was feasible for worldwide use. However, AID's reaction to this approach was not very favorable, and nothing further has been done with it.

Indeed, none of the attempts to assess impact has generated much interest in replication or further research and development. Consequently, the problem of assessing the impact of a participant's training in the back-home situation remains a major bottleneck to effective evaluation of the training program. AID may have to continue to evaluate particular aspects of the training program that might result in specific recommendations for improved operations, such as in orientation, the placement and selection process, or English language training. However, the value of evaluation studies is questionable until a clear relationship of the returned participant's job and civic performance to his or her training experience is ascertained. Furthermore, unless criteria and methods for measuring the impact of training on the participant's job effectiveness are developed and applied, program planners will continue to lack the necessary guidance for designing future training programs.

## 2.4 Analysis of Recommendations

Although all 206 reports were reviewed to identify the frequency and nature of recommendations for improvements in the participant training program and AID's response to them, only 141 actually presented relevant recommendations. The breakdown of these 141 reports by region and year is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Reports Containing Recommendations, by Year and Region

Note: LAC is Latin America and the Caribbean; NE is the Near East.

A total of 1,380 recommendations addressing various aspects of the participant training program were drawn from these 141 reports. First, each of the 1,380 items was listed separately to ensure that none was lost in subsequent analysis. The 1,380 discrete items were then reduced by joining identical or similar recommendations into 123 clusters. The third step was to classify the 123 recommendation clusters into the following 12 categories to facilitate further analysis and treatment:

### 1. Training Strategy: Policies and Coordination



2. Training Design
3. Location of Training
4. Complementary Programs
5. Participant Selection
6. Participant Placement
7. Orientation
8. English Language Training
9. AID Management and Administration
10. Support Services at Training Site
11. Reentry and Followup Activities
12. Research and Evaluation

The distribution of the 1,380 clustered recommendations within the 12 categories by year and region is presented in Tables 4 and 5.

An examination of the data in each of the 12 categories revealed the following most frequently mentioned issues in the training process.

#### 2.4.1 Orientation

Recommendations for improving participant orientation have been consistently the most numerous through the years and within regions. Two hundred and forty-four recommendations contained in 72 reports constitute nearly 20 percent of all recommendations recorded in the study. More than 50 percent of the recommendations in this category pertain to the predeparture phase. Although more recommendations were made for Asia than for the other regions, most of these were made prior to 1970, when training for Asia was at its peak. The African region has the greatest number of recent recommendations in this area. The major clusters in order of frequency are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Thorough briefings on program details should be provided to all participants before departure.

Cross-cultural orientation to conditions in country of training should be given to all participants before departure.

Cross-cultural orientation should include

information on personal and social adjustment problems (4), discrimination (6), housing (7), food (4), U.S. monetary system and budgeting (4), and U.S. health care system (1).

More research should be done on the various approaches to orientation.

Different aspects of Washington International Center's orientation program need to be reviewed.

More lead time should be provided to participants to prepare for departure.

Other

#### 2.4.2 A.I.D. Management and Administration

Recommendations on management and administration have been the second most frequently cited through the years (157 recommendations in 53 reports), with most interest evidenced during the past 10 years. In fact, there have been more comments on this subject since 1980 (69) than on any of the other 11 categories. There is a fairly even regional pattern, except for Latin America, which has shown considerably less interest in this subject; indeed, only 4 of the 157 recommendations come from reports on the Latin American region. The recent upsurge of interest in AID management and administration can probably be attributed partly to the major organizational shifts within the Agency over the past 10 years in managing participant training. This period has been marked by the virtual elimination of U.S. training officers overseas; vast cutbacks in AID/Washington direct-hire training staff; the introduction of major changes in modes for handling participants, including contracting out the bulk of programming to two agents; and repeated efforts to develop a participant training information system for better management of the overall program, including the many participants handled under university and other contractual arrangements. The major recommendation clusters in this category are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Better communication and coordination is needed between AID and participating organizations (i.e., contractors and training institutions).

Record keeping in general should be improved.

AID should strengthen staff involved in participant training.

AID and program agents should have more personal contact with participants.

All AID-sponsored participants, including contract and loan-funded participants, should be subject to the policy guidelines in Handbook 10.

Program extensions should be carefully reviewed and controlled.

Other

#### 2.4.3 Training Design

Training design, the third most cited category (152 recommendations in 79 reports), has been of consistent concern to evaluators in all regions over the years. More recent interest is noted in Africa and the Near East, corresponding to increased training in these regions. This category comprises recommendations on the design of individual training programs. Planning for post-training utilization and the need for more specialized, practical, and relevant training are major concerns. The primary recommendation clusters are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Participants' post-training job responsibilities should be considered during program planning.

More practical training opportunities should be built into training.

Long-term training should be favored over short-term training.

Planners need more specific information on training institutions and their program offerings, services, and facilities (e.g., university catalogs, development training guide).

Training needs to be more specialized and tailored to participants' needs.

Technical aspects of training should receive careful consideration in program design (e.g., duration, pace, level, variety.)

Other

#### 2.4.4 Reentry and Followup

Although this category ranks fourth in overall frequency of recommendations, the specific cluster on the need for improved followup and contact with returned participants tied with the need

for improved orientation as the most frequently cited issue in the evaluation studies over the past 30 years. Interest in improvements in the followup phase is even greater when related clusters of needed improvements are considered: more attention to removing constraints on utilization of training after returning home, membership in U.S. professional societies and subscriptions to professional journals, programs for updating and sharing training, and more accurate participant followup records. Nearly half of the followup recommendations were made in the 1960s (73 of the 150 total), but interest has reasserted itself in recent years with 37 recommendations since 1980. Again, the large number of recommendations for Asia were mostly made prior to 1970, whereas Africa leads in frequency in recent years. The major recommendation clusters are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations AID Missions should follow up and maintain contact with returned participants.

More attention should be given to the possible constraints on utilizing and applying training back home (e.g., available resources, supportive work environment).

Membership in U.S. professional societies and journal subscriptions should be encouraged.

Means for institutionalizing the use and transmission of the training experience should be developed in cooperation with the host government, especially-supervisors (e.g., formal programs, meetings, and seminars).

Missions should have accurate and current records of all returned participants.

Missions should institute procedures for identifying and accounting for returning participants.

Participants' training should be periodically updated (i.e., seminars, refresher courses, and continuing education programs).

Alumni associations of returned participants should be encouraged.

Other

#### 2.4.5 Training Strategy

This fifth-ranking category comprises a total of 129 recommendations contained in 76 reports, with approximately two-thirds of the recommendations having been made during the 1960s. The major issues include the needs for involving participants and supervisors

more in the planning process and for assessing training levels and needs of host governments, especially in relation to their institutional capacity to absorb trainees. Little was said about training strategy (or any other category) during the 1970s, but interest has resumed in the issue since 1980, with 23 recommendations for improvements recorded over the past 4 years. Whereas participant and host government involvement in program planning was essentially an issue of the 1960s, host government absorptive capacity and donor coordination are more recent concerns. Africa, Asia, and the Near East have displayed a relatively similar interest in the issue, whereas Latin America has shown less concern. The major recommendation clusters are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Participants should be more involved in the training program design.

Supervisors should be more involved in the training program design.

An assessment of training needs should be conducted in host countries where lacking.

Host government involvement in all aspects of training should be increased.

Missions should be involved with participants' programs from planning stages to followup.

AID should coordinate with other countries in planning and implementing training and exchanging information and resources.

Host government absorptive capacity should be considered.

Other

#### 2.4.6 Support Services at Training Site

This category ranks sixth (111 recommendations in 51 reports) in frequency and has been a steady concern of all regions through the years. Interest in the need for improving support services at the training site has markedly increased since 1980, during which time one-third of the recommendations were made. Major issues are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations More opportunities for cross-cultural interaction with Americans, both students and the community, should be provided to participants.

Faculty advisers should encourage participants to select courses and research projects (theses) that are relevant to the

home country.

On-site contact office/person (e.g., foreign student advisers) should be available to participants for personal and academic counseling and administrative support.

Participants should be discouraged from having foreign national-only relationships.

Participant progress and academic reports should be forwarded to Missions more regularly.

Degrees and certificates should be awarded whenever possible for prestige and job placement value.

Other

#### 2.4.7 Training Location

Concern over training location (103 recommendations in 48 reports) has clearly emerged in recent years as a central issue. Over 40 percent of the recommendations have been recorded since 1980, of which 73 percent were made in reference to Africa. This issue, which primarily involves U.S. versus third-country versus home-country training, appears to be of considerably less interest to the other regions, although the Near East has expressed a consistent interest over the years. The major issues of concern are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Greater use should be made of in-country training.

National and regional training resources should be identified, inventoried, and evaluated.

AID should examine the mechanisms for improving the management of third-country training.

U.S. academic training should be limited to the graduate level.

Greater use should be made of third-country training .

Other

#### 2.4.8 Participant Selection

Although ranked eighth in this listing of major issues, the

selection of participants was frequently commented on (92 recommendations in 45 reports). A fairly steady interest has been shown through the years, with Asia indicating more concern prior to 1970 for improvements in the selection process than other regions. As in other categories, Latin America falls well behind, with only two recommendations on the issue over the past 20 years. Although improving selection criteria and methods is a primary and growing concern, the selection of women candidates is of more recent interest. Major recommendations are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Studies to improve selection criteria and process should be undertaken.

Candidates' motivation, multiplier potential, and future social and civic roles should be considered in selection.

Selection committees should be established in host countries.

AID should have a more active role in selection.

AID should encourage selection of more women candidates.

Other

#### 2.4.9 English Language Training

This category has been cited 73 times in 33 different reports over the past 30 years. Interest has been high in recent years, particularly in Africa, where 13 recommendations for improvements in English language training have been registered since 1980 alone. Asia has expressed growing concern on this issue in the last 10 years. The major current issues include the need to review the testing program and standards and the need for more in-country and regional English language training. Major recommendation clusters are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations AID needs to review its language testing program (e.g., type of test, scoring).

Programs should provide more extensive English language training.

In-country English language training should be explored.

AID should utilize regional center for English language training.

Other

#### 2.4.10 Complementary Programs

Recommendations for improvements in complementary programs (72 recommendations in 48 reports) focus primarily on the need for such programs, especially reentry workshops to facilitate participants' use and transmission of training back home. Recommendations have been fairly consistent through the years among the four regions, although recommendations for supplementary specialized programs (e.g., management/administration) have been most numerous in the last 10 years. Major issues are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Reentry workshops (e.g., communications seminars) should be encouraged.

Evaluation of complementary training should be conducted (e.g., mid-winter and communications seminars).

Short-term specialized programs should be built into training where appropriate (e.g., management, administration, manpower planning).

Complementary programs (orientation, mid-winter seminars, and reentry workshops) should be considered essential in program planning.

Other

#### 2.4.11 Participant Placement

Even more surprising than the low ranking of participant placement issues (61 recommendations in 28 reports) is the minimal interest specifically expressed by the regions in the participant placement process. Only 14 of the 61 recommendations relate to regional studies, with the balance being contained in other types of reports. This might be because regional studies are mostly field based, where problems of placement are not normally encountered. Major issues are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations Participant documentation needs to be flexible yet detailed enough to ensure proper placement.

Criteria for selecting training institutions should be reviewed.

Attention should be given to counseling and support services for foreign students when selecting a training institution.

The process of evaluating and providing credentials to training institutions needs to



be improved.

Other

#### 2.4.12 Research and Evaluation

As might be expected, research and evaluation issues received the least attention in the reports examined in the literature review (36 recommendations in 28 reports). However, there has been more interest shown in the past 5 years, during which time nearly half the recommendations have been made. Although problems of academic equivalency have consistently been of concern over the years, the need for more information on the impact of training and program effectiveness has been more recently expressed. Major concerns are as follows:

Frequency of Recommendations More research is needed in evaluating the impact of training on development (e.g., definitions, methodology, criteria, measures of productivity, variables).

Training institutions should be provided with feedback on individual programs from participants, either through correspondence or field evaluations.

Problems of academic equivalency between home country and training-country institutions should be investigated.

Other

#### 2.4.13 Most Frequently Cited Recommendation Clusters

The following list presents the most frequently cited recommendation clusters without regard to the 12 categories described above. At the beginning of the list are recommendations that were cited as many as 41 times in various reports through the years; at the end of the list are recommendations that were cited at least nine times. This list of significant recommendations includes 57 of the 123 recommendation clusters and comprises 893, or 64 percent, of the total 1,380 recommendations. The purpose of this listing is to present, by frequency, the major concerns in the training program that evaluators have concluded need improvements.

- AID Missions need to follow up and maintain contact with returned participants. (41)
- Technical briefings on program details should be provided to all participants before departure. (41)
- Participants should be more involved in training program design. (29)

- Cross-cultural orientation to conditions in the country of training should be given to all participants before departure. (28)
- Participants' post-training job responsibilities should be considered when planning the program. (27)
- More practical training opportunities should be built into the program. (27)
- Reentry workshops like communications seminars should be encouraged. (25)
- Evaluation of complementary training should be conducted. (23)
- Studies to improve selection criteria and process should be undertaken. (22)
- Long-term training should be favored over short-term training. (22)
- Supervisors should be more involved in training design. (21)
- More research is needed on various approaches to orientation. (21)
- AID needs to review its English language testing program (e.g., standards, scoring, type of test). (21)
- More opportunities for cross-cultural interaction with Americans should be provided to participants. (21)
- Various aspects of Washington International Center's orientation program need to be reviewed. (20)
- Better communication and coordination is needed between AID and participating agencies (i.e., contractors and training institutions). (20)
- More research is needed in evaluating the impact of training on development. (18)
- More lead time should be provided to participants to prepare for departure. (17)
- Record keeping (e.g., monitoring and accounting for participants) should be generally improved. (17)
- AID should strengthen staff involved in participant training. (16)
- Per diem and allowance rates should be increased. (15)

- More attention should be given to the possible constraints on using and applying training in the work environment after return. (15)
- Planners need more specific information on training institutions and their program offerings, services, and facilities (e.g., university catalogs, development training guide). (14)
- Short-term specialized programs should be built into training where appropriate (e.g., management, administration, manpower planning). (14)
- Training-needs assessments should be conducted in host countries. (13)
- Greater use should be made of in-country training. (13)
- Candidates' motivation, multiplier potential, and future social and civic roles should all be considered in selection. (13)
- Participants should be given written materials on the technical and nontechnical aspects of the program. (13)
- More extensive English language training should be provided in the program. (13)
- In-country English language training should be explored. (13)
- Training should be more specialized and tailored to participants' special needs. (12)
- National and regional training resources should be identified, inventoried, and evaluated. (12)
- AID should examine the mechanisms for improving the management of third-country training. (12)
- Faculty advisers should encourage participants to select courses and research projects (theses) that are relevant to the home country. (12)
- Memberships in U.S. professional societies and subscriptions to professional journals should be encouraged. (12)
- Means for institutionalizing the use and transmission of the training experience should be developed in cooperation with the host government, especially supervisors (e.g., formal programs, meetings, and seminars). (12)
- Greater use should be made of third-country training. (11)
- U.S. academic training should be limited to the graduate

level. (11)

- Returned participants could assist in predeparture orientation. (11)
- Orientation should include information on the U.S. educational system and facilities. (11)
- On-site contact office/person (e.g., foreign student advisers) should be available to participants for personal and academic counseling and administrative support. (11)
- Host government involvement should be increased in all aspects of training. (10)
- Missions should be involved with participant programs from planning stages to followup. (10)
- Technical aspects of training should receive careful consideration in program design (e.g., duration, pace, level, variety). (10)
- Training design should match host country physical and developmental environment (i.e., appropriate technology). (10)
- Selection committees should be established in host countries. (10)
- Participant documentation needs to be flexible yet detailed enough to ensure proper placement. (10)
- Criteria for selecting training institutions should be reviewed. (10)
- Linkage between the training program and participants' responsibilities to host country development goals should be emphasized in predeparture orientation. (10)
- Missions should have accurate, current records of all returned participants. (10)
- AID should coordinate with other countries in planning and implementing training and exchanging information and resources. (9)
- AID and program agents should have more personal contact with participants. (9)
- All AID-sponsored participants, including contract and loan-funded participants, should be subject to the policy guidelines in Handbook 10. (9)
- Program extensions should be carefully reviewed and controlled. (9)

- Missions should institute procedures for identifying and accounting for returning participants. (9)
- Participants' training should be periodically updated (i.e., seminars, refresher courses, and continuing education programs). (9)
- Alumni associations of returned participants should be encouraged. (9)

#### 2.4.14 Most Frequently Cited Recommendation Clusters Since 1975

To more accurately identify the major participant training issues of recent years, the following list presents the 17 most frequently cited recommendation clusters since 1975, without regard to category, with the most frequent listed first:

- Participants should be given thorough predeparture technical and cross-cultural orientation, using such resources as written orientation materials and returned participants. (31)
- Missions should follow up on returned participants by instituting procedures for accounting for returnees, maintaining contact with returnees, and supporting their continued professional development. (21)
- Short-term complementary programs should be built into training programs to provide participants with skills for adjusting to their home environment and job responsibilities (e.g., management, communications, and reentry workshops). (17)
- Record keeping in general needs to be improved. (13)
- AID's English language testing program needs review. (13)
- More research is needed on different approaches to orientation, including review of different aspects of the Washington International Center program. (12)
- Participant training staff should be strengthened. (12)
- More practical training opportunities should be provided. (12)
- Participants should be provided with personal and academic counseling at the training site. (12)
- Regional and national training resources should be inventoried. (10)
- Per diem and allowance rates need to be reviewed. (10)

- Planners need more information on training institutions and specific programs. (9)
- AID should improve mechanisms for managing third-country training. (8)
- More research on evaluating the impact of training is needed. (7)
- Better communication and coordination among participating agencies is needed (e.g., AID/Washington, Missions, training institutions, and contractors). (7)
- More English language training is needed in-country. (7)
- All AID-sponsored participants should be subject to the policy guidelines in Handbook 10. (7)

Some of the most commonly cited recommendations in earlier studies have received little, if any, comment since 1975. These include recommendations for more participant and supervisor involvement in the training design, planning for post-training utilization, problems with selection, more long-term than shortterm training, and other recommendations to a lesser degree. This pattern reflects past efforts to make improvements in various aspects of the training program, whether or not as direct results of specific evaluations. The following section examines AID's response to its past evaluation efforts through discussions with selected AID officers and a review of current training strategies and activities underway within the regional bureaus, S&T/IT, and field Missions.

### 3. A.I.D. RESPONSE TO PAST TRAINING EVALUATIONS

To explain why some of the same recommendations on participant training have been made repeatedly over the years, an attempt was made to determine the nature of AID's response to past evaluation efforts. To this end, interviews were conducted with officers in AID regional bureaus, PPC, and S&T/IT, and policy and strategy papers were reviewed to learn of current trends and activities underway that address some of the issues highlighted in the review of participant training evaluations. In addition, revisions in old manual orders and handbooks on participant training were reviewed, and a meeting was convened with several current and former AID officers familiar with the training program to gain a historical perspective on past AID response to evaluation activities and to specific recommendations. Finally, field Mission personnel were consulted for their views on the findings of this study. The following summarizes the efforts of this exercise to gain some insight into the nature of AID response to participant training evaluation.

### 3.1 Regional Bureau Activities

#### 3.1.1 Africa

The Africa Bureau has initiated various activities that respond to a number of the recommended improvements in the region's participant training programs, especially in the areas of English language training, third-country training, training design and strategy, and followup. For example, a study on English language needs and capabilities in the Sahel region and several studies to encourage more use of third-country training have recently been conducted. One of these includes a directory of Francophone African training institutions and a handbook to guide participant placement. The Sahel/West Africa office plans to provide training to Mission personnel in using these materials.

Addressing the Agency's recent momentum for increasing participant training levels, the Sahel office undertook a survey of all past Mission training to assist in developing a training strategy and design for the region. Data were collected on trends in overall numbers, sector, type of training, location, and host countries' capacity to absorb returning participants.

Regarding followup evaluation, the Africa Bureau recently sponsored an in-depth study of the African Graduate Fellowship (AFGRAD) program to assess its effectiveness in contributing to African development. Although the Bureau training strategy endorses a number of followup activities for participants, the need to improve activities in this area was acknowledged during the interviews. Several Bureau officers also expressed the need for better predeparture orientation and indicated interest in collaborating with S&T/IT in developing written predeparture materials if the use of such materials could be assured. Additional staff and resources and the designation of regional training officers were suggested to supplement Mission efforts to provide adequate predeparture briefings and to facilitate more use of third-country training and better followup.

This sampling of participant training activities reflects positively on the Africa Bureau's attention to some of the major training issues and its response to recommended improvements. Furthermore, interest was expressed in the results of the study on the design of future training projects.

#### 3.1.2 Near East

A recent status report on Near East Bureau participant training lists several current activities that address a number of the major issues identified through this review. In Yemen and Oman, for example, development-related training is provided to spouses (mostly female) of academic participants at U.S. community and junior colleges. This arrangement not only responds to recommendations that more support be given to families of long-term participants, but is also a way of increasing the percentage of female trainees.

In the area of followup, the Bureau is encouraging all Near East Missions to establish systems to track and support returning trainees. Egypt has been operating a computerized followup system for some time, and Portugal has made some progress in this regard. A Bureau spokesman was hopeful that S&T's proposed participant training management information system will further assist the region in these activities.

Significant trends in the Bureau include increased management and administrative training and more technical and graduate training. The Bureau also is involved in improving the use of third-country training by developing a guide to regional institutions. Efforts to improve English language screening procedures are also noted with the development of an Arabic version of the Modern Language Aptitude Test, which will assess training candidates' English learning ability. The Near East Bureau's activities in these areas, many of which were recommended in evaluation studies, suggest that the region's evaluative efforts have been of general benefit.

Most of the studies relating to Asia are evaluations of country programs during the 1960s and early 1970s, which is also when most of the region's training was taking place. During this period, a number of Missions, (e.g., in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand) were running active and responsive orientation and followup programs. Subsequent to the dropoff in participant numbers and limited evaluation activities in this region since the mid-1970s, participant training issues have been largely ignored.

A Bureau spokesman acknowledged that current predeparture orientation and followup activities in the region could be improved but not without more resources and support. However, these activities can be provided for in specific projects like the current General Participant Training II project in Indonesia. This project also provides for the development of an Overseas Training Unit within the Indonesian Government, which will eventually assume responsibility for all overseas training activities, including orientation and followup. The Indonesia Mission also has assessed in-country English language training needs and capabilities and is computerizing data on returned participants (of which there are approximately 8,500) based on the followup system developed in Egypt.

#### 3.1.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Like the Asia Bureau, the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has few recent studies on the participant training process in Latin America from which to follow up specific recommendations. Although this region has a long history of training, the proportion of participants from the region in relation to other regions has been declining since 1978. However, several recent projects aim to train almost 10,000 Latin Americans over the next 5 years. These include the 1982 LAC Regional Training Initiatives (LACTI) project, the 1983 Caribbean Basin Scholarship



Project (CBSP), and the proposed Central and Latin American Scholarship Program (CLASP). CLASP came about largely as a result of recommendations in a Kissinger Commission report.

A notable aspect of all three training projects is that evaluation systems have been built into each, providing for monitoring of participant progress and program effectiveness. The proposed evaluations are more extensive than the project evaluation studies normally carried out for AID projects and will include utilization and impact studies. Also, LAC is requiring Missions to develop Country Training Plans to assist in training design and strategy before substantially increasing participant numbers. Regarding orientation and followup activities, a Bureau spokesman noted that training in general is given less attention than other more pressing demands at the Mission level (e.g., Country Development Strategy Statements, ABS). Accordingly, only a mandated increase in attention to training or strengthening of staff responsible for training activities will improve orientation and followup efforts.

### 3.2 Bureau for Science and Technology/International Training Office

A recent strategy paper on S&T/IT's plans for improving the participant training program addresses most of the issues identified in our review of evaluative reports. The following initiated or proposed activities concern recommendations made in the areas of orientation, English language training, training design, management, and followup:

#### 3.2.1 Orientation and Support Programs

1. S&T/IT plans to develop a 15-minute videotape in 1985 to be used by Missions in predeparture orientations.
2. S&T/IT asked the National Council for International Visitors to coordinate the mid-winter seminars this year in an effort to improve their management and relevance. These programs also were evaluated.
3. A concept paper has been developed for improving in-country English language training, which will be included in the congressional presentation for consideration. The proposal provides for assessment services to host countries on English language training potential and for demonstration or pilot programs at selected sites for regional training.

#### 3.2.2 Training Design

1. S&T/IT is financing the development of guidelines for devising Country Training Plans to improve training design and strategy for each Mission. These guidelines will be included in the revised version of Handbook 10

for optional use by Missions. A pilot Country Training Plan was pretested in Peru, Honduras, India, and Malawi.

2. A project officer's guide is being developed by a contractor to assist Mission personnel in designing and planning training. It will be a how-to guide to complement Handbook 10.
3. A data base for U.S. short-term technical courses and facilities is being developed by a contractor that will provide planners with current and valuable information on specific training opportunities.

### 3.2.3 Management

1. Handbook 10 is being updated and upgraded with clearer policy and guidelines. Specific revisions are being made in the areas of evaluation, Mission management, responsibilities of contractors, the medical screening requirement, allowance rates (which are also being increased), and general cost-effectiveness. These revisions will aim to facilitate the training process and improve AID's management of the program.
2. An integrated participant training management system is also being developed. This system will include a micro computer-based software package that will allow monitoring of all Mission training activities from the initial Project Identification Document or Project Paper stage through the life of each training program. This system will be linked to the present participant training information system and will allow for immediate data transfer between AID/Washington and the Missions.

### 3.2.4 Followup

1. A new chapter with guidelines for evaluation activities is contained in the revised Handbook 10. This will involve three questionnaires -- one to be administered to participants when they return home from training, another 1 year after their return, and a third questionnaire, which is intended for project officers. Together, these survey instruments should provide information on planning, implementation, and the utilization of participant training. This package is currently being pretested in the Dominican Republic, Botswana, and Indonesia.

The activities discussed in the preceding sections account for a substantial number of recommendations made on various aspects of participant training. However, a number of areas have not been adequately addressed, including provisions for ensuring the use of existing and proposed orientation materials in the predeparture phase; specific approaches to followup support (i.e., formal

programs); the need for more specialized training (e.g., management and communications); and the need to assess the impact of training as opposed to evaluating the training process itself.

### 3.3 Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination/Policy Development and Program Review

The Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination was also contacted for its reaction to the major issues revealed through this review of evaluative studies on participant training. Several stimulating suggestions were provided for improving and enriching participant training, and the need for improved followup support was highlighted, with an emphasis on professional upgrading and networking, rather than simply monitoring for the sake of Agency records.

### 3.4 Review of Participant Training Guidelines in Agency Manual Orders and Handbook 10

AID guidelines for participant training were issued in Manual Orders until 1981, at which time Handbook 10 was prepared. Individual revisions have been made over the years and, as already mentioned, the complete Handbook currently is being revised and updated. Although information is not available before 1974, the current Handbook and previous revisions were reviewed regarding the findings of this study. In addition to the revisions underway, the following is a summary of significant previous changes, some of which reflect cumulative AID response to recommended improvements in the participant training program since 1974.

1. Changes in allowance rates for U.S. and third-country participants and revision of cost estimates
2. Changes in provision of health and accident insurance and visa procedures
3. Revision of PIO/P to three pages, including financial information, training requests, and biographical data form
4. Clarification of regulations covering successive degrees, program extensions, and transfers
5. A procedural change, transferring the U.S. administrative orientation from AID's Office of International Training to the Washington International Center
6. Discontinuation of contract for and requirement of Pre-Academic Workshops and Management Communication Seminars
7. Updated list of professional societies and revised information on Development Training Guide

8. In the area of predeparture orientation, request that contractors provide predeparture orientation; suggestion that cultural U.S. orientation be incorporated in English language training; and recommendation for enlisting the assistance of returned participants
9. In the area of followup: revision of certificate of achievement, revisions in reporting requirements, and requirement for an exit interview

### 3.5 Workshop on Participant Training Evaluation

In addition to individual interviews with AID/Washington staff and the limited review of strategy papers and Agency guidelines on participant training, CDIE sponsored a 1-day workshop on participant training evaluation. A number of former and current AID officers with substantial participant training experience were invited to relate their impressions of AID's response to the various recommendations through the years. Workshop participants had been provided with copies of the draft report before the meeting and were prepared to share their recollections and views. The workshop generated considerable discussion and provided many historical illustrations of why certain recommended measures were or were not adopted over the years. The discussion also seemed to confirm several reasons for AID's limited response to certain recommendations, including bureaucratic or funding constraints and circumstantial considerations that made such recommendations irrelevant, inappropriate, or unrealistic. Perhaps the most important contribution of this meeting, however, was the identified difficulty in determining Agency response to past evaluations or the overall benefits of evaluation activity.

The major findings from the draft report were grouped into nine subject areas to guide the discussion. The following represents the course of the discussion on each subject for the record and not a formal consensus by the group.

#### 3.5.1 Training Strategy, Evaluation, and Research

PPC attempted to translate the findings of AID's worldwide participant training evaluation surveys of the 1960s into operationally useful applications. Operational profiles were developed, including a summary of the findings and proposed changes in participant training policy and operations. The worldwide survey and its findings were also the subject of one of PPC's evaluation reviews (Administrative Spring Review Meetings). It was recalled that IT treated the review more as a public relations exercise for its program than an analytical critique, and that the recommendations were essentially ignored. This was partly attributable to AID's failure to identify the function of participant training and its contribution to development or its relationship to other elements of technical assistance, and partly to AID leadership's tendency to regard participant training as a "nice thing" without

according to the priority assigned to activities like the Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS), CP, and so forth.

Basic conflicts in the training program also were mentioned as factors constraining the development of an overall training strategy. These include the following considerations: Is training project-focused or more generally based? Is training tailored to an individual's needs or to national objectives? Is training short term or long term? Is training technical or theoretical? It was further acknowledged that strategy, like design, must remain responsive to AID objectives and inherent political motivations.

It was generally agreed that an analytical framework is needed for determining the conditions under which participant training is optimally useful. More explicit guidelines on the purpose of training and what the outcome should be are needed by planners, especially in allocating resources. It was also suggested that AID clearly define the role and function of training or human resources development in development (perhaps as is done in the logical frameworks).

Many members of the group expressed concern about the anticipated increase in new participants without improvements in standards. Such improvements will require a different order in leadership support (i.e., deeds, not just words) and more serious negotiation with Congress and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for more resources.

### 3.5.2 Training Design, Location and Placement

The moderator for this subject area maintained that country specific guidance cannot favor one type of training over another, although sector analyses (including human resources development) have tried to provide some guidelines on country-level training. Changing political mandates have influenced decisions on training design in the past by emphasizing certain training approaches. Despite the political climates, however, it was noted that participant training has been fairly consistently used by Missions over the years. Regarding the recommendations for more practical training experiences, the choices should be made in AID/Washington and not in the field where such specific information is not as accessible.

### 3.5.3 Selection

The discussion focused on some reasons why this issue did not receive a great deal of attention in more recent studies reviewed in the CDIE report. Among the explanations given was the increase in the use of intermediaries/contractors since 1975 to manage the selection process, with AID placing more emphasis on establishing and monitoring criteria that can be built into contracts and project design. Selection committees are used in most cases, with the host government doing most of the selection with AID's

ratification. Project and overall development needs are emphasized rather than individual qualifications, and individuals are selected for training to fill those needs. It was also recalled that selection as a major current problem figures prominently in a recent Inspector General's study on participant training.

#### 3.5.4 Orientation

Although most of the group acknowledged the importance of predeparture orientation, questions were raised on the relationship of such orientation to the successful training experience. The 1969 study by American University's Development Education and Training Research Institute on the orientation programs at the Washington International Center was cited as evidence that lack of orientation does not jeopardize the training investment. However, others believed that no orientation prior to departure left participants ill-equipped for their training experience. It was noted that the proportion of participants today in technical training, as opposed to academic training, was three to one, and that orientation for short-term technical participants is not as critical as it is for long-term participants.

Factors restricting AID's orientation program efforts include limitations on available equipment, time, resources, and support for the program. Contractors were cited as having conducted better orientation programs than the Missions. Leadership must decide to do a better job in this area. The purpose of orientation also needs to be considered, that is, whether the goal is successful training or influencing attitudes about the United States.

#### 3.5.5 English Language Training

English language training is a big problem in Indonesia, Yemen-Oman-Egypt, and French West Africa. Regional training was attempted in Africa and Asia and considered a disaster because of problems of cultural adjustment.

Levels of English language ability need to be addressed in the selection process, with the caution that higher English language standards as a criterion for selection would tend to favor candidates from the capitals and more urban areas, restricting selection of those from rural sectors.

Recent action on English language testing included simplification of the American Language Institute, Georgetown University (ALIGU) screening test. It was recommended that IT offer a special service (perhaps through consulting arrangements with the staff of ALIGU and similar experts) to help develop in-country English language training programs.

### 3.5.6 A.I.D. Management and Administration

Some reasons given for poor management of the training program in the past included decentralization of the training function in the mid-1970s, which led to domination of training by the regional bureaus, and, more recently, the redundancy of certain operations within the contractor/IT relationship.

AID needs to define standards for monitoring participants. Project managers often do not know how many participants are being trained by contractors or what their responsibilities for project monitoring entail. It was suggested that project officers in the field receive more training on the participant training program. A Participant Training Management System is being set up, and it should greatly enhance capabilities in the field and in AID/Washington to monitor participants from the Project Paper to followup stages.

Several comments were made on the drastic reduction in IT staff, from 278 in 1975 to 31 today, while the number of participants increased from approximately 6,000 to 10,000. This has exacerbated problems in managing and coordinating all the actors involved in the participant training program. The Director of IT added that the work previously performed in-house is now carried out by the capable staff of numerous contractors.

### 3.5.7 Support Services

The moderator reported that support services are currently good to excellent for technical programs and short courses, both programmatically and personally. However, academic support services are generally poor and diminishing, given dwindling university funds. Foreign student advisers are among the first to go in budget reductions. Furthermore, the land grant colleges involved in training programs are responsible to their local communities and tend to emphasize the needs of the less privileged Americans who are entering such colleges rather than the needs of foreigners. The response to this situation has been to charge AID for special services for participants.

### 3.5.8 Complementary Programs

The field does not see reentry as a crucial part of the program. The communications seminars were discontinued in the mid-1970s as mandatory components of the program because of generally increased training costs. A revised and greatly improved reentry management communications program is currently offered and provided to participants on an optional basis. Several recent management studies sponsored by IT generally endorsed the reinstitution of these workshops, but with a much stronger management element.

### 3.5.9 Followup

Followup was acknowledged as an important part of the training program, but one that needs to be tailored to the specific nature of the program. Important considerations in the design of a followup program include the size of the training program, the size of the total country training program and the percentage of AID involvement, whether the specific training project is related to the country program or more general, and the logistics for reaching participants.

Most participant training program impact studies have been an exercise in opinion gathering. It was suggested that the criteria for measuring impact should be based on success stories and critical incidents rather than on correlations between utilization and personal contact and followup.

Followup goes well beyond monitoring participants and should include professional networking after training. The Director of IT suggested that a series of followup questionnaires be administered to identify and maintain contact with participants for the occasional impact evaluation study or critical incident. One long-term participant slot could be dropped from each Mission's program and the savings used to fund followup activities for an entire Mission; the Director believed the activity would be very worthwhile.

### 3.6 Mission Participant Training Survey

The discussions with former and current AID personnel and the review of relevant documents established that, through the years, AID has addressed all 12 major categories of recommendations identified in this study to some extent and with varying degrees of benefit to the Agency and the participant training program. This exercise offered some insight into the utility of evaluation efforts and why some recommendations were or were not adopted.

However, it also confirmed the difficulty of attempting to explain or identify with any precision past AID response to specific evaluation recommendations. To obtain a more complete picture of AID response and of the issues that seem most critical today, the views of AID Missions were solicited by cable. Mission perceptions were considered especially important because major responsibility for implementing participant training lies in the field, which is also where improvements in specific country training operations will have the most impact. The following is a summary of responses by 45 Missions to a PPC cable inquiry about the status of field-training activities regarding the major findings of this study.

1. Little impact evaluation is being carried out in the field, although it is considered a worthwhile under-taking.
2. Most Missions have formalized articulated training strategies in collaboration with host governments and have formalized mechanisms for developing such strategies



3. Training is generally planned as an integral part of project design.
4. Most Missions conduct predeparture orientation for participants, including information on cultural aspects and educational institutions in the country of training; many Missions require arrival orientation in the United States or third countries.
5. Most Missions conduct debriefing evaluation sessions with returned participants; many Missions maintain regular contact with participants and provide them with journal subscriptions and memberships in professional societies.
6. Most Missions reported host government participation in the selection process and in programming and monitoring activities.
7. Most Missions consider some degree of third-country training as an alternative to U.S. training (although this reportedly occurred in less than 25 percent of the cases in most Missions' training portfolios).
8. The mid-winter seminar is the most requested complementary training, followed by management and practical training.
9. Most Missions require academic participants to reach a minimum TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 507.
10. About half the Missions expressed the need for additional staff, whereas most Missions suggested upgrading the skills of current training office staff.

The review of participant training activities underway or planned in the regional bureaus and the Missions suggests that AID's past evaluation efforts have been of some use in guiding the planning and conduct of participant training in AID/ Washington and in the field. Major issues highlighted in previous evaluations are receiving some attention by AID/Washington and Mission personnel. However, the range or strength of activities reportedly underway to address some of these issues cannot be accurately evaluated within the scope of this study.

Perhaps several field visits to obtain first-hand information on current participant training practices should be carried out and contractor activity evaluated for a more complete understanding of the major issues in the training program and how to address them.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 General Conclusions

Although past evaluation studies may well have contributed incrementally to improvements in the participant training program, the findings from this literature review reveal that many recommendations are repeated through the years, often in the same country or region, with unaccountable frequency. That some of the same recommendations initially made by the worldwide survey in the 1960s (most notably in the areas of orientation and followup) are among those most frequently mentioned in recent years raises questions concerning both the utility of evaluation efforts and AID's response.

During discussions with current and former AID officers, several reasons were suggested for AID's seemingly limited response to certain recommendations made repeatedly over the years. These include the uncertain nature of AID's constituency and funding base, leading to shifts in policies and strategies; the frequent turnover of personnel in AID/Washington and the field; the lack of funds and personnel to follow through with recommended improvements; the lack of leadership support and the lower priority accorded participant training in general; and circumstantial considerations that made some recommendations irrelevant or unrealistic.

There are undoubtedly other reasons contributing to the real or apparent limited response by AID to some of the major issues highlighted in this review, including the argument that the overall benefits of the training program are so obvious that no major improvements are necessary. However, most of those we interviewed agreed that the program should be improved, particularly given the substantial current expansion of participant training. The major areas suggested in our review and analysis of recommendations in past evaluations that are most in need of attention include the following: (1) research and methodology the area of training impact; (2) orientation--especially in the predeparture phase; (3) followup of returned participants, with an emphasis on professional development; (4) complementary programs, especially management training; (5) English language training; (6) third-country training; and (7) training staff capabilities.

Most of these areas are recognized by the regional bureaus and S&T/IT as needing improvement and are being addressed to some extent. Yet the degree to which improvements are being made is unclear and perhaps inadequate. Given the frequent mention in recent years of the foregoing issues and the inconclusive evidence explaining the extent to which recommended improvements have been made, concerned elements of AID should consider further study of these issues on a country (or perhaps regional) basis before substantially expanding the participant training program. In reexamining these issues, the following recommended actions drawn from the conclusions of past evaluations should be considered.

## 4.2 Recommended Actions

### 4.2.1 Training Impact Assessment

An effort should again be made to develop and adopt a set of measures for assessing the impact of training on participants' post-training job performance and home-country development. Although precise measurements may be beyond the reach of social science, those aspects of the training process that appear to be associated with a high probability of success might be identified. Such knowledge might enable evaluators to recommend specific steps to planners and managers for improving future training programs. This operationally oriented research should begin with a reexamination of the work already done in this area (i.e., the impact assessment research carried out by the American Institutes for Research studies in the mid-1970s). This might also form the basis for another worldwide evaluation.

#### 4.2.2 Orientation

The need to improve the overall participant orientation process, pre- and post-arrival, is an issue deserving more attention. As articulated in numerous evaluations, participants generally want more information on their new experience, in as timely a manner as possible. Evaluation studies reveal a fairly consistent pattern of requests for improvements through the years and in all regions. Specific suggestions include (1) more thorough technical and cultural briefings in the sending country; (2) written materials to supplement briefings (e.g., several Africa Bureau program officers expressed interest in collaborating with S&T/IT in developing written predeparture materials); (3) greater use of former participants, in-country U.S. technicians, and the Peace Corps as resources for predeparture orientation; and (4) greater use of the Washington International Center's orientation services. (Washington International Center sources revealed that only 1,200 annual new starts in U.S. training go through their program.)

#### 4.2.3 Followup

The need for AID to attend more closely to the post-training experiences of returned participants consistently received as much comment as orientation did through the years. Recommendations advised Missions to keep in touch with returned participants through scheduled, periodic contacts and better record keeping and to create a more supportive environment for returnees to use, share, and update their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Providing memberships in professional societies and subscriptions to professional journals, forming returned participant alumni associations, furnishing equipment and supplies necessary for participants to introduce new ideas, financing attendance at professional meetings and workshops, and providing continuing education programs are the principal types of followup suggestions most frequently made through the years. As often noted in the literature review and confirmed in our interviews, the lack of funds constrained the implementation of these followup activities. If AID should decide to endorse followup as an integral part of a country training program, which has been strongly recommended in many studies, some modest financial support might be needed.

#### 4.2.4 Complementary Training

This area covers the issues of what, if any, short-term complementary training experiences participants should have to supplement their training programs. The types of short-term training generally provided include preacademic workshops, mid-winter seminars on a variety of subjects during participants' vacation period, and reentry workshops on management and communication skills. Recommendations in this category, which have been very frequent in recent years, have generally favored more and better complementary programs. Management and communications training has received the most mention regarding its importance for equipping participants with the skills necessary to readjust to their home-country environment, including management responsibilities and their role in transmitting their training experience to others. A recent Ph.D. dissertation emphasized participant preparation for reentry to the home country as a prerequisite for effective application of training. In view of numerous recommendations, especially those from two recent management studies addressing this subject, concerned elements of AID should reexamine the role of management and communications training in a participant's training experience and consider making such training an integral part of an appropriate program.

#### 4.2.5 English Language Training

Concern for improving English language training and raising standards has been increasingly expressed in evaluations. Concerned regional bureaus and Missions should reexamine their policies and provisions in this area, including testing, standards, and location (i.e., in-country, regional, or U.S.-based English language training.)

#### 4.2.6 Third-Country Training

This issue has also recently emerged as a central concern, especially for potential cost-effectiveness. AID should further consider recommendations to inventory regional resources and to examine mechanisms for managing third-country training.

#### 4.2.7 U.S. Training Officer Staffing

The lack of U.S. direct-hire staff to provide the policy and management leadership the participant training program would require to act on these recommendations has been an oft-cited issue in recent years. Considering that U.S. training officer staff, both in the Missions and AID/Washington, is currently at its lowest point in the history of the program while the number of participants is dramatically increasing, the Agency should reexamine the staffing issue. If the assignment of more U.S. staff overseas in Missions or in regional locations such as the REDSOs is

impossible, the skills of the capable, but generally more narrowly experienced, Foreign Service Nationals training staff overseas could be upgraded.